INGLEBY
The Portraiture of Shakespeare

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA001 426 508 6

PR
2929
I5

The Portraiture of Shakespeare
– Ingleby – Lond. 1876.

Presented by Dr. C. W. [illegible], Nov. 1876.

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

CHAPTER V.

THE PORTRAITURE OF SHAKESPEARE.*

THE title of my paper may well provoke this question—'Seeing that Shakespeare has been dead and buried 257 years, what can be known of his personal appearance beyond what may be gathered from the few accredited portraits, for which he is believed to have sat? and granting that all those are unsatisfactory and imperfect representations of the man, how is it possible to add to their verisimilitude, except by the discovery of another authentic portrait?' Of course I do not pretend that this *is* possible; nor am I able to announce to you any discovery of the sort since 1849, when the Becker Mask was deposited at the British Museum. Nevertheless I have somewhat to communicate, which may be both new and interesting, touching certain recent attempts to recover the lost lineaments of Shakespeare,

> And steal dead seeming of his living hue. †

---

* Read at a Meeting of the Royal Society of Literature, Jan. 21, 1874, and reported (in brief) in the Presidential Address of 1874, p. 50.

† From Shakespeare's sixty-seventh Sonnet.

Doubtless the chances are against the success of such attempts: but it is not difficult to see that in one respect at least they may be helpful and instructive. If we only consider what a bust or a portrait must be in order to express the 'form and favour' of a man at his best, we shall readily arrive at a principle, which, while it serves to explain that diversity of expression which is found in different copies from the same picture, to some extent justifies the attempt to recover a lost likeness.

I have frequently observed that the 'portrait of a gentleman,' painted by an indifferent artist, bears a certain resemblance to the artist himself. In the Epistle of St. James it is asserted that a man 'beholding his natural face in a glass, goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.' I am not sure that this is strictly true; but, if it be so, I am none the less convinced that every man has a latent impression of his own countenance, which he is more apt to delineate than any other. Moreover, I have observed that in portraits, executed by the best artists and possessing all the attributes of a faithful likeness, there is always an expression which it is impossible to attribute to anything seen in the face of the sitter. The truth seems to be, that the artist who has studied his subject, so as to seize the expression of the face at its best, is dependent upon his own powers of imagination and memory: and on these he draws largely to supplement the expression of the blank and wearied face which periodically confronts him in his studio. It thus happens that in representing his subject he imparts something of himself, and the

most life-like portraits are those which represent the very heart of the painter.

On this principle we can clearly understand how it comes to pass that of all the known engravings of Jansen's portrait of Shakespeare, in the collection of the Duke of Somerset, there are not two that have the same expression. But the Chandos portrait, which is the property of the nation, from its damaged condition and obscurity offers a still better field for experiment. It has been engraved and copied in oils times without number, and so different are the expressions of the resulting prints and paintings that it is difficult to believe that they are all from the same exemplar. I can certify as a fact that Cousins' engraving is a remarkably faithful copy of the original. Now compare it with Scriven's print of Ozias Humphry's drawing, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the fire and severity of this last are wholly due to the temperament of the copyist. It is well known that William Blake could conjure up before him the visible forms of the dead, and retain them long enough to paint their likenesses. From some of these we may conclude that the latent memory of ancient portraits was at least a factor in this singular phenomenon; but the portraits of 'the Man who built the Pyramids' and 'the Ghost of a Flea' do not so readily yield to this explanation. You will perhaps call to mind an incident related by the elder Varley respecting the portraiture of 'the Ghost of a Flea.' The old man was present during the 'sitting,' and he relates that, the Flea having opened his mouth, Blake was unable at once to com-

plete the drawing, but drew on a separate piece of paper a sketch of the open mouth. The apparition having once more closed his mouth, Blake resumed the first sketch, and finished the portrait. This seems a veritable case of portrait-painting from the inmost consciousness: and what is most curious about Blake's portrait of 'the Ghost of a Flea' is that it is a caricature of the well-known features of the late Lord Lytton.

However ridiculous may appear the notion that Blake could summon into his presence the forms and faces of persons no longer existing, or those whose existence is impossible, and could draw from them, as from real flesh and blood, I am convinced from my own experience that Blake gave a truthful account of the matter, and that he was wholly unconscious of the process by which such appearances were produced. That process, which is a sort of concurrence of imagination with certain states of the brain and the optic nerve, probably affecting the retina in as perfect a manner as the light from natural objects, is unconsciously performed by all persons who have the experience of optical illusions.

Now that very constructive power, which in the case of Blake was at times monopolised by the nerves of vision, may just as well act through the hand, and, instead of presenting an illusory object which the artist may delineate or depict may guide him unconsciously in the production of an ideal portrait. Such things are called 'spirit drawings,' which I regard as a most misleading title. But without entering upon that allied, if not strictly relevant, inquiry, I may state generally that every

genial portrait owes perhaps as much to the ideal of the artist as to his faculty of faithful representation; and that he works from within as well as from without. Herein lies the justification of the attempts that are made from time to time to produce a thoroughly satisfactory portrait of Shakespeare. In this pursuit we have little to guide us beyond a few portraits of somewhat doubtful authenticity and of very short pedigrees, the bust in the Chancel of Stratford Church and Droeshout's engraving prefixed to the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare. Beyond the suggestion of these generally inadequate and discrepant representations we have no guidance from without.

Unfortunately for our inquiry Shakespeare does not stand on the same footing as other great men of his time. He is *sui generis*, that is, of a class by himself in every respect. There is scarcely a poet above mediocrity who has not written commendatory verses on his fellows. We do not know of a single copy of such verses by Shakespeare. Allusions to his contemporaries are to be found in the writings of every other poet and dramatist of that day; some poems and plays are obtrusively crowded with such personal allusions. In the whole thirty-seven dramas credited to Shakespeare there is one obscure allusion to Spenser and one distinct allusion to Marlow. The prose works published in the later part of the sixteenth, and the earlier part of the seventeenth centuries contain abundant notices of every poet of mark save Shakespeare, whose name and works are rarely and only slightly mentioned: and when he is named or alluded to he is praised as an amatory poet or as an actor, rarely as a dramatist. The works of Lord Brooke,

Sir John Davies, Lord Bacon, Selden, Sir John Beaumont, Henry Vaughan (Silurist), Lord Clarendon, &c., &c., show no consciousness of Shakespeare's existence. Can it be that the poor player was evidently despised; that he was too humble to be selected as the subject of much eulogy in those early times, or to be invited to become the eulogist of another? For the same reason, whatever it was, hardly anyone cared to possess his portrait; and until John Aubrey records in 1680, *i. e.*, sixty-four years after Shakespeare's death, that he was reputed to have been 'a handsome, well-shaped man,' no writer ever said a word as to his personal appearance. It is but fair to add, that as to portraits, Edmund Spenser stands in precisely the same position as Shakespeare. The portraits claimed for him are hopelessly discrepant; and it is hard to say which should be accepted and which rejected. If we reckon up all the painted portraits (excluding known forgeries) said to represent Shakespeare, we shall find that their number is about twenty-two. Some of these, at most two or three, may have been taken from life; and certainly one is of the requisite antiquity. Not a few, however, are probably genuine portraits of other gentlemen of the time; and some are idealised portraits of Shakespeare. To these must be added two busts, one plaster cast and one engraving on brass; and we have reckoned up our whole capital. A very few words on some of these relics.

Foremost in authenticity is the Bust in the Chancel of Stratford Church. We know quite enough about this to make it our most important possession. Apart from what we know,

it is *a priori* most improbable that the family and friends of Shakespeare should soon after his death have placed in the most conspicuous place in the church of his native town, where almost every one was as familiar with his personal appearance as with that of their most intimate friends, a life-sized bust of the Bard which would not be recognised by his fellow-townsmen. We might, in the absence of any relative knowledge, presume that the bust is a likeness. But we know from Sir William Dugdale that it was the work of a Dutch sculptor named Gerard Johnson; and we know enough of this sculptor to believe that he was not a common mason, though certainly quite a second-rate artist. We all know wherein such an one fails, and wherein he succeeds: he can usually make an obtrusively striking likeness, though always an unpleasant one. Here is just such a work. How awkward is the *ensemble* of the face! What a painful stare, with its goggle eyes and gaping mouth! The expression of this face has been credited with *humour*, *bonhommie*, *hilarity* and *jollity*. To me it is decidedly *clownish*; and is suggestive of a man crunching a sour apple, or struck with amazement at some unpleasant spectacle. Yet there is force in the lineaments of this muscular face. One can hardly doubt that it is an unintentional caricature; but for that very reason it should be an unmistakeable likeness. In the plaster casts taken from Bullock's copy, and in those separately prepared from the original by Warner and Michele, that peculiar expression is toned down to insipidity, and one catches some touch of dignity and refinement with utter loss of force. But the casts do not give a truthful representation of the bust.

We obtain some important facts from this rude work. As it is at present coloured the eyes are light-hazel, the hair and beard auburn. Such were the colours put on in 1748 by Mr. John Hall, the limner of Stratford, and which reappeared on the removal, by Mr. Collins, of Malone's white paint. We have no reason to doubt that when the bust was renovated in 1748, the very colours it had received by order of Dr. John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, were repeated by his namesake.

The extraordinary depth of the upper lip, which measures an inch and a quarter, has been accounted for by the conjecture that the sculptor may have had an accident with the nose. I have remarked that it is very dangerous to frame hypotheses respecting Shakespeare, for they are apt to get converted into 'obscure traditions,' and may come at last to be regarded as historical facts, the evidence of which has been lost. This happened to the conjecture of Capell and Waldron that Shakespeare was lame, in order to explain two lines in the sonnets, the meaning of which he had wholly misapprehended. In the next century Mr. Harness revised the conjecture, without any mention of Capell; Mr. Thoms accounted for the supposed defect by making Shakespeare a soldier: and finally the late Mr. Richard Simpson published a note in which he referred the circumstance of Shakespeare's lameness to 'an obscure tradition,' and proceeded to employ it as a fact to elucidate some expressions in Jonson's *Poetaster*. Just so, in the matter of Shakespeare's nose; Mr. J. Hain Friswell remarks (*Life Portraits*, p. 8): 'the nose of the bust of Shakespeare, like that of Tristram Shandy, it is said, has met with an

accident, the former from the instrument of Dr. Slop, the latter from the chisel of the sculptor.' 'It is said,' is the magical *formula*, which becomes the germ of the myth. I cannot find that it ever was said, except as a hypothesis to explain the disproportionate depth of the upper lip: and on measurement, it was found that the depth of Sir Walter Scott's upper lip exceeded that of Shakespeare's bust.

I am afraid we must take our stand on the fidelity of this bust—at least with some allowable qualifications. When we find a sculptor dismissing his work in this rough fashion, so that, as Mr. Fairholt says, 'the eyes are untrue to nature, &c., the ciliary cartilages are straight, hard and unmeaning, and the glands at the corners next the nose entirely omitted,' we may be sure the fidelity of the face must be received with something more than the proverbial grain of salt.

Next in authenticity to the bust is Droeshout's engraving, prefixed to the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's Works. It must have been executed after Shakespeare's death; and therefore we may be sure it was taken from some sketch or painting, probably in the possession of Mrs. Shakespeare or Dr. John Hall. No such exemplar has come down to us or is known to have existed, unless the Felton Portrait be the one that was so employed; and this is, on the whole, unlikely, for reasons to be stated when I come to speak of that portrait. But allowing the probability that such an exemplar did exist (and apart from it, no reliance could be placed on the engraving), it may have perished along with Shakespeare's papers. It has been surmised that these papers fell a victim to some pious

soul's puritanical ardour. Unhappily the suspicion, if it be to fall anywhere, involves Shakespeare's wife or Shakespeare's daughter. The sorry Latin elegiacs engraved in brass on Mrs. Shakespeare's gravestone contain no allusion to her immortal husband, being concerned only with the good lady's immortality. She must not be held responsible for them; at least no further than she justified their encomium. The English verses on Mrs. Elizabeth Hall's tablet are enigmatical.

> Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
> Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall:
> Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
> Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.

The things compared are Mrs. Hall's supersexual wit, and her wisdom to salvation. Which is 'that,' and which is 'this?' In strictness '*hic* plerumque ad posterius, *ille* ad prius refertur:' so that the lines seem to say, she owed her wit partly to Shakespeare; her piety wholly to him, with whom she is in bliss. Meanwhile where is her mother? It has been suggested that the lines mean the reverse, 'this' and 'that' being transposed for the sake of the rhyme: viz., that she owed her piety in some degree to Shakespeare; her wit wholly to him: but that would seem to make the wit her claim to salvation. Another suggestion is, that *him* refers to the Saviour; and I incline to that view myself: at the same time I am afraid we are inquiring too curiously in putting these old epitaphs to the question; and I do not think they tell at all against Mrs. Shakespeare. Probably both Mrs. Shakespeare and Mrs. Hall were good religious souls, but one does not see why either of

them should be ashamed of the Bard, so as to disown his works and destroy his manuscripts. There is one curious fact, however, which is quite enough to beget a myth, like those of Shakespeare's lameness and his bust's broken nose. Heminge and Condell had the plays printed from the quartos and play-house copies; they even had a title-page printed with the date 1622. They may have hoped to be able to correct the press from manuscripts left by Shakespeare at New Place, in the custody of his widow. Now the facts are, that Mrs. Shakespeare died on August 8, 1623, and that the editors had a new title printed, with the date 1623. Did they wait till she was dead before venturing to issue the volume?

Be that as it may, the folio appeared with the Droeshout engraving. Even in its best state it is such a monstrosity, that I, for one, do not believe it had any trustworthy exemplar. Those who have, as I have, examined the engraved portraits prefixed to the various collective editions of the time, will not be greatly astonished at the pretence of attaching such an abomination as the Droeshout head to the folio editions of Shakespeare.

Next in order we must place the splendid portrait, said to be by Cornelius Jansen, which passes for Shakespeare in the collection of the Duke of Somerset. Unfortunately its pedigree does not extend farther back than 1761; but Woodburn, who published in 1811 the first print from it, stated that it had belonged to Prince Rupert, who left it to his natural daughter, Mrs. Emmanuel Scroopes Howes: whence it must have come into the hands of Spackman the picture-dealer: and thence to

Mr. Jennens in 1761. The picture is of undoubted antiquity, and bears in the right hand corner, Æt. 46, 1610; which corresponds with Shakespeare's age in that year. As Jansen is known to have painted the daughter of Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's friend and patron, it is not improbable that he should have painted for the earl's collection the bard himself. Then we take the Lumley, the Chandos, the Felton, the Ashbourne and the Challis portraits.

Such was our stock of the more important representations of the Bard up to about the middle of this century. Since then it has received two acquisitions, both of which were at different times in the possession of Professor Owen, at the British Museum: viz., the Duke's Theatre Bust, now in the vestibule of the Garrick Club, and the cast discovered by Ludwig Becker, now belonging to Dr. Ernest Becker, of Darmstadt. The latter professes to have been cast from a wax-mould taken from Shakespeare's face very soon after death; and I must candidly say I am not able to spot a single suspicious fact in the brief history of this most curious relic. Along with it is a miniature in oils, painted in 1637 from the cast, representing Shakespeare lying in state, his head crowned with bays.

The comparison of these various works reveals the fact that the Somerset Portrait, the Ashbourne Portrait, the Challis Portrait, and the Becker Cast, despite numberless petty discrepancies, present a substantial agreement. One can hardly doubt that they all represent one man, and that man William Shakespeare. But unfortunately for the trustworthiness of our

most authentic representations there is no resemblance between any of these and either the Stratford Bust or the Droeshout engraving! In fact the former is countenanced only by the Chandos and Lumley Portraits; while the latter may have had the same original as the Felton Portrait, or the Felton may be an idealised portrait from the Droeshout.

We thus see that we have three classes of portraits: the first being led by the Stratford Bust and followed by the Lumley and the Chandos Portraits; the second led by the Droeshout engraving and followed by the Felton Portrait; or *vice versâ;* while the third and by far the most interesting class is led by the Somerset Portrait and followed by the Ashbourne and the Challis Portraits, and most remarkably corroborated by the Becker Cast. How any two of these classes are to be identified I must confess myself unable to suggest. As far as I am aware no adequate experiments have been made. For one thing, I would have a plaster bust modelled after the Becker Cast; I would restore this, then vulgarise it, till I had got a poor insipid thing, such as is the Stratford Bust; I would then break off the end of the nose, and elongate the upper-lip: and I should then see whether the outcome was anything like that Bust. A great many different experiments of the sort might be suggested; but the fact that most of these relics are in private collections, and some hardly accessible, renders the task of tentative experiment both costly and difficult.

I have now to mention the various attempts that have been made in recent times to construct a trustworthy and

satisfactory portrait or bust of Shakespeare. The more important of the earlier idealised portraits are the Becker Miniature, Sir Godfrey Kneller's Portrait after the Chandos, presented by that artist to Dryden, Sir Joshua Reynolds' Portrait after the same, painted for Bishop Newton, and the Hunt Portrait, now in the ante-room of Shakespeare's birth-room at Stratford. The last is believed to have been taken from the Stratford Bust, probably for something connected with the Stratford Jubilee. If so, it is singular that the nose of the bust, which is fairly arched, is not reproduced in the painting. It is, however, a very pleasing portrait; and its benignity and intelligence are very poorly represented in any of the photographic prints taken from it that I have seen. The one in Mr. J. Hain Friswell's *Life Portraits* has most unfortunately curtalled the magnificent forehead of the original. To these we must add Schemaker's Statue in Westminster Abbey and Roubiliac's Statuette, modelled for Garrick. The last furnishes the bust of our image-makers.

It is remarkable, but a fact, that the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth produced no work of art, either portrait or bust, which deserves mention here: nor since that time has anything of the kind been attempted in England, save Mr. Armistead's *relievo* of Shakespeare on the east side of the Albert Memorial.* America, however, is favourably contrasted with England in this particular. The Americans had many years ago testified to their enthusiasm for Shakespeare

* Another statue has since been placed in Leicester Square. It appears to be taken from Schemaker's.

by producing a fine bust of him, modelled by Mr. Greenough after the Caen Portrait, which had been discovered by one Mr. Joy, and brought by him to Boston. Since that time their appreciation of Shakespeare's genius, and their interest in all that concerns him, have been continually on the increase. In April, 1872, a bronze statue, executed by Mr. J. Q. A. Ward, an eminent American sculptor, was placed in Central Park, New York, and inaugurated with the usual ceremonies of unveiling and speech-making. From that time to the present this work has been a constant subject of controversy. On receiving a photograph of it from a friend in Philadelphia I was at once struck with its feebleness and untruth. It suggested to me a stern philosophic student, and certainly not a man of acute observation, ready wit and hilarious temperament. Its faults are so admirably summed up by a writer in *Lippincott's Magazine* that I offer no apology for making the following extract from his article. Mr. William R. O'Donovan writes:

> The ideal in art, simply stated, means the portrayal of certain things in nature, giving due prominence to the characteristics in the order of their importance. Applying this proposition to Sculpture, a portrait-statue of Shakespeare should be a just expression of his individuality, based upon such portraits of him as exist. * * * Beginning with the head of the statue, the first thing that strikes one is the facial angle, which instead of approximating to the perpendicular line which distinguishes the highest Caucasian type, slopes backward, giving the angle of the lower races. A line drawn from the tube of the ear to the point of the chin will be found longer than one drawn from the same point to the prominence of the frontal bone, thus giving undue importance to the masticating apparatus, the teeth and jaws, which not only detracts from

the dignity of the head, but at once precludes all possibility of its expressing intellectuality. * * * Again, the head of the statue, as viewed from the front, * * is a compressed head, somewhat less than the usual width, and from the angle of the lower jaw to the parietal bone the line is almost straight, giving an insipidity of expression. * * The artist has modeled one side of the face from the other, making them as near alike as he could, thus [violating a great principle of nature and] departing from a most noticeable feature in the mask, &c.

and the writer shows how utterly untrue to the principal guides (the Stratford Bust, the Becker Mask, &c.) is Mr. Ward's work. He then attacks the poise of the figure, the trunk and the legs; and after some columns of very trenchant but just criticism, he closes with this peroration :

Shakespeare divined alike the motives of the boor and the king, the tenderest emotions of the most fragrant womanhood and the profoundest depths of sensuousness. As he was the greatest of poets, we may well believe him to have been the manliest of men, serene and gentle in conscious power, and thoroughly human, with inclinations as deep and varied as his thoughts. Let the reader filled with such impressions turn to this poor image and seek for one responsive thought. The opposite of every quality of Shakespeare will be suggested—first effort, the Philosopher, not the Poet, reason, not song; then self-assertion, rather than conscious power. The head is bowed in contemplation, as if the mind were digesting something just read; the mouth is compressed and the eyes are distended; in every part of the figure there is exaggeration and effort without definite purpose.

Such is Mr. O'Donovan's judgment on the first statue of Shakespeare attempted in America: and so far as the photograph enables me to appreciate the various points he discusses, it seems to me a dispassionate and objective judgment.

The last contribution to the portraiture of Shakespeare

which I shall bring before you is also American: this is the so-called American Mask; an integration of the Becker Cast, by Mr. William Page. I subjoin an account of it which was published in *The New York Herald* and several other recent American journals.

Over two years ago a distinguished gentleman called upon Mr. William Page, the artist, to ask him to paint a picture of Shakespeare. Upon consenting to perform such a task, Mr. Page had only in mind such materials as the Droeshout print, the Chandos portrait and the Stratford bust afforded for the composition of the work.

Finding, afterwards, that Messrs. J. Q. A. Ward and Launt Thompson, the sculptors, had each a photograph of a certain mask of Shakespeare, which was an object of some speculation to them just then, on account of their joint competition in furnishing a model for the statue of Shakespeare to be erected in the Central Park, he visited their studios and examined what was indeed to him a revelation. Both his brother artists asserted they had not sufficient data to settle the authenticity of the mask. Mr. Ward had availed himself of his photograph to a certain extent in the beginning, but later, feeling uncertain respecting it, he laid it aside, long before his model was perfected.

Finishing his picture for the gentleman mentioned, which the latter wished to have approximated in the general character to the Chandos portrait, Mr. Page commenced the *magnum opus* of his life. He soon obtained from England some twelve or thirteen different views of the Mask, a photograph of the Chandos as made by the Arundel Society, and the information concerning Becker's discovery, &c., which has already been set forth. When he had fairly entered upon his work, the whole matter seemed more and more plausible—the authenticity of the mask, its resemblance to the Droeshout, the Chandos and the Stratford bust. It was no easy process to properly fill up cavity after cavity from which the original pieces were wanting in the Becker Mask and still preserve or rather revive them in his own. Had Becker's Mask happily occupied his studio then, much of this trouble might have been obviated and the opportunity of

terminating his labor at an earlier day been given him. It was left for him to overcome these difficulties.

* * * * * * * * *

The American Mask is about two feet long, and were a figure of proportionate size made for it the whole would stand seventeen feet high. Never was there so wonderfully expressive and majestic a face as this. In it nothing is omitted; nothing is made out by negation. The veins, the wrinkles in the skin, the indications of the muscles under the skin, the smallest part recognizable to the naked eye, are given there with the same ease and exactness, with the same prominence and the same subordination, as they would be cast from nature—*i. e.*, in nature itself. Alternate action and repose are admirably displayed in it. Now the lids seem about to open, the shadow of a smile appears to linger on the lips; now again the face is grave and meditative. There is a harmony, a unity of spirit, diffused throughout the wondrous mass and every part of it, which is the glory of it. It has the freedom, the variety, the stamp of nature. There is no ostentation, no stiffness, no over-labored finish. Every part is in its place and degree and put to its proper use.

It is said, that a side view recals the profile of Julius Cæsar; the front view, the countenance of Napoleon I.

As the American Mask reproduces with scrupulous nicety every detail in the original, save such as Mr. Page refers to the decomposition of the face or to accidental injury to the plaster, it of course exhibits the long scar on the forehead over the right eye. It has been suggested that this is the blemish which Shakespeare refers to in the 112th sonnet.

> Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
> Which vulgar scandal stampt upon my brow;

whence we are asked to conclude, that vulgar scandal had referred this blemish to a discreditable source, such as a tavern brawl or a street fight, in which our bard had engaged. Mr.

Thoms will, I doubt not, hail this discovery as fresh evidence that Shakespeare had been a soldier. For myself, whatever may be the true state of the case, I am not disposed to accept the material and literal meaning attributed to the 112th sonnet.

However, there is one circumstance which is in itself most curious, and possesses a special interest for persons who believe in the so-called spiritual manifestations. A gentleman resident at Stratford-upon-Avon has communicated to the public press an account of three visions of the poet with which he had been favoured. It appears that he had never heard of the alleged scar on the Becker Cast: nor indeed is it likely, since the speculation was first made quite recently in New York, *i. e.*, three years and a half after the apparition of Shakespeare. I am quite sure the account he gives is no invention, for it accords with my own experiences in an illness from which I suffered fifteen or sixteen years ago, when among an immense number of apparitions was a medallion-portrait of Napoleon III. This gentleman says:

> About three years and a half ago I was taken ill with a nervous affection, and consequently passed some sleepless nights; but, to add to my misery, I was obliged to look upon strange sights which came before me—in the shape of people — visions of those who had passed away from the world. The shadows at first appeared very faintly, but plain enough to be seen by me; * * then gradually appeared before me in a clear and distinct light a number of people. The most prominent of all, I noticed the great poet Shakespeare. His general appearance resembled the pictures I had seen of him, with one exception — he had an ugly wound over his left eyebrow, but higher up his forehead. It was not a straight mark that a deep cut would leave; it seemed as if the forehead had been broken at that place by a blow from some heavy, blunt instrument, like

a hammer or a life-preserver, or a heavy stick. It left the impression upon my mind that Shakespeare had been murdered. I think I saw this vision three or four successive nights, and each time I noticed the mark upon his face. He passed me in an upright position. His features had a white ashy appearance. The wound on his face was [of] a dark red colour, and his eyes were closed as in death; and it seemed to me that there was no expression of life in his face. This I was most unwillingly compelled to see several times. When I recovered from my indisposition I began to consider it only a weakness of the brain; I was advised to do so by several persons whom I told of it soon after.

Now the scar shewn in Mr. Page's Mask is high up over the *right* eye. But some observers have thought they found 'the traces of another scar on the forehead'—'fully three inches in length'—running 'in a transverse direction, commencing over the *left* temple, near the scalp, and ending about the centre of the forehead.' But this, it is alleged, 'is merely a seam, and was, no doubt, but a slight injury—nothing but a scalp wound, the bone remaining unhurt.' So this does not correspond with the visionary wound, which shewed 'as if the forehead had been broken in.' It is a pity we cannot make the English vision and the American discovery square with each other: but it is not to be done anyhow. Still the material discrepancy supports the visionary's good faith.

I must confess I am in daily dread of hearing that Mr. Gerald Massey has got hold of this story: for it will fatally confirm him in one of his pet heresies (for he has many), that some lines in John Davies' *Paper's Complaint*, refer to Shakespeare. I give the lines *in extenso*, because Mr. Massey found it convenient to impose on his readers a garbled

version of them. (See *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, &c., 1872, Appendix.) He will see in these lines a natural allusion to the jeopardy in which the bard's life stood in consequence of this gash on his forehead; and we may expect that he will quote the date of Davies' poem as that of the occasion on which it was inflicted. *Paper's Complaint* was printed in *The Scourge of Folly*, 1620; and the sequent lines occur on pp. 231 and 232.

> But, Fame reports, ther's one (forthcomming, yet)
> That's comming forth with *Notes* of better Sett;
> And of this *Nature;* Who both can, and will
> With descant, more in tune, me fairely fill.
> And if a senselesse creature (as I am;
> And, so am made, by those whome thus I blame)
> May judgment give, from those that know it well,
> His Notes for *Arte* and Judgement do excell.
> Well fare thee man of Arte, and World of Witt,
> THAT BY SUPREMEST MERCY LIVEST YET;
> YET, DOST BUT LIVE; yet, livst thou to the end:
> But, so thou paist for Time, which thou dost spend,
> That the deere Treasure of thy precious Skills
> The World with *pleasure* and with *profitt* fills.
> Thy long-wing'd, active and ingenious *Spright*
> Is ever *Towring* to the highest height
> Of *Witt*, and *Arte;* to beautifie my face:
> So, deerely gracest life for lifes deere *Grace.*

The allusion is thought by Dr. Brinsley Nicholson to be to Sir Walter Raleigh. The poem was printed in 1611, and therefore too early for Cartwright to have been intended. All that Mr. Gerald Massey says of it is wide of the mark. Besides

transposing some of the lines and omitting others, he assumes that Davies is speaking in his own person of himself: whereas it is Paper that is personified and is the complainant. Mr. Massey, too, calls Davies a Puritan. He was a writing-master, and became a Roman Catholic.

F.S.E
ol.

3 1205 03058 9830

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A A 001 426 508 6